



## Indiana State Department of Health

### **COVID-19 Planning for Schools and Local Health Departments: Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Cafeteria/Food Service**

**I have been told by another director that the IDOE has said that we have to have some kind of barrier like Plexiglass to shield our staff and the students. That is why I was wondering if we could wear the face shields while serving instead of the Plexiglass shields. I also want to know if my staff is required to wear face masks while preparing meals if they spread out during that time.**

Some recommendations include:

- Provide boxed lunches and options that do not require students to move through the traditional lunch line and pick up their selections.
- Have an adult provide the access/hand off the items to avoid students reaching in to pick up food.
- Use Plexiglass panels if students are moving through line as normal.
- Add additional tables in the café and practice additional distancing measures so students can eat in the café.
- Think through options that best fit your situation ... there are multiple options, and not one size fits all.

#### **Water fountains should be turned off, but what is the guidance for about water filler stations?**

The ideal is to have an adult use gloves and fill the water bottles to decrease touch points. An option would be to have an adult monitor the filling station(s) if filling stations are used in your school (this option increases touchpoints). Preference would be to obtain water bottles through food service for breakfast and lunch distribution.

#### **If students are eating in the cafeteria, do they need to be seated facing the same direction, or can they be seated across the table from other students?**

Facing in the same direction and spacing them out to ensure social distancing is the preferred approach. If the cafeteria has round tables and students who sit across from each other will be 6 feet apart, then they should be staggered so that they are not directly facing one another.

**I have a question related to concession stands for athletic and fine arts events. I've seen guidance that says concessions may be sold if food handlers and cashiers use appropriate PPE and only prepared, prepackaged food is available. I am seeking some clarification as to the term "prepared." Would our concession stand workers with gloves and masks on be able to "prepare" hamburgers and hot dogs and wrap them in foil to be served?**

These would be considered pre-packaged so long as they are individually wrapped and condiments are included with the food. Bottles of ketchup and mustard or other condiments should not be placed in a buffet style where they will be frequently touched. Classroom items should also be prepackaged.

**What specific policies and/or procedures are being discussed to address students with life-threatening allergies with the proposal of eating lunch in the classroom, especially at the elementary level? Will this policy increase workload of the classroom teacher?**

Both FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education) and the CDC recommend allergen-free classrooms. Schools will need to consider food allergies as they make their plans.

**How is lunch being handled where they will not be wearing mask and it would be hard to get 6 feet of separation?**

The CDC recommends that students bring their lunch or that schools provide prepackaged items, box lunches, and disposable food items whenever possible. When possible, having younger children eat in their classrooms can help cohort students and reduce potential exposures. Assigning seats at lunch can help identify close contacts of a student who tests positive. Students should wash their hands thoroughly and often, and any surfaces they will be touching should be disinfected before and after they are used, whether it's in the classroom or lunchroom.

---